狂骨の夢

THE CRAZY BONES DREAM

story: Kyougoku Natsuhiko art: Shimizu Aki
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TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

No notes for this chapter! Shocking, I know. Don't worry, you'll get pages and pages of notes in the next couple of chapters.

Since I don't have any useless trivia for you this time, here's a picture of the author of the series, Kyougoku Natsuhiko. Yes, he does apparently cosplay his own character all the time, but somehow he still manages to be cool.

CHAPTER 6

SEKIGUCHI-KUN, I CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH.

MY WIFE HAS BEEN ACTING STRANGELY LATELY...

WHEN MY WIFE IS FEELING BETTER, I HOPE YOU'LL COME VISIT.

CHAPTER 6

Autopsy Indicates He Was Strangled

Horror Novelist Udagawa Takashi Murdered

The Wife Is The Main Suspect

Famous Writer Found Dead At His Home In Zushi

His wife wasn't just suffering from anxiety...
She must have had severe schizophrenia, or maybe she was using drugs...
If I'd been more perceptive, then maybe Sensei would still be alive...

HOW IS THIS EVEN REMOTELY YOUR FAULT?

KIBA-SAN!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

HE'S RIGHT.

DO THE POLICE KNOW THAT UDAGAWA-SENSEI'S WIFE IS MENTALLY ILL?

FIRST YOU CALL ME A MONKEY, AND NOW I'M A COW?

ANYWAY, THAT'S NOT THE POINT!

OH, YOU KNOW HOW SEKI-KUN IS.

HE LIKES TO RUMINATE ON HIS THOUGHTS LIKE A COW CHEWING GRASS.

EVEN THOUGH HE LOOKS MORE LIKE A MONKEY.

HM

IT'S IN THE LOG BOOK.

LOG BOOK

THE OLD GUY THAT I WORK WITH HAS SOME EXPERIENCE IN THAT AREA, SO HE TOOK CARE OF QUESTIONING HER.

FLOP

THEY DO NOW.

KUBO'S FUNERAL WAS THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY, RIGHT?

SO UDAGAWA WAS KILLED THE DAY AFTER YOU SAW HIM.

12/2 7-9 pm	12/1 Evening
Udagawa Murdered	Kubo's Funeral Sekiguchi Talked To Udagawa

ANYWAY, UDAGAWA TAKASHI'S ESTIMATED TIME OF DEATH IS BETWEEN 7 AND 9 PM ON DECEMBER 2ND.

YEAH... I GUESS SO.

YOU TOLD ME ABOUT THE CASE ON THE EVENING OF THE 2ND...

BUT IT WAS EARLY EVENING, SO HE WAS PROBABLY STILL ALIVE AT THAT POINT.

IT'S A LONG DRIVE FROM TOKYO TO ZUSHI AND HE'S A BIG FAN OF UDAGAWA'S WORK, SO THEY TALKED THROUGHOUT THE RIDE.

THEY MADE IT TO ZUSHI AT AROUND 3AM ON THE 2ND.

WE'VE ALREADY SPOKEN TO UDAGAWA'S CHAUFFEUR.

HE CAME FORWARD AS SOON AS HE SAW THE NEWSPAPERS.

HIS NAME IS TOTSUKA, AND HE WORKS FOR OKAZAKI CAR SERVICE.

ONE BRANCH OF THE PATH GOES TO UDAGAWA'S HOUSE, AND THE OTHER GOES TOWARDS THE NEIGHBORING HOUSE.

THAT'S THE ONLY ACCESS TO UDAGAWA'S HOME.

THERE ARE ACTUALLY TWO HOUSES UP THERE, SEPARATED BY ROCKS.

UDAGAWA'S HOUSE IS ON A CLIFF.

THE PATH IS TOO NARROW FOR A CAR, SO THE DRIVER DROPPED HIM OFF AT THE BOTTOM OF THE CLIFF.

DID THE DRIVER TAKE HIM TO HIS HOUSE?

NO.

snore

NOT ALL THE WAY, AT LEAST.

DIDN'T UDAGAWA-SENSEI MENTION THAT THE WOMAN NEXT DOOR WAS TAKING CARE OF HIS WIFE?

YEAH.

PRESUMABLY, UDAGAWA WENT STRAIGHT HOME.

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN TOO LATE TO CALL ON THE NEIGHBOR, ANYWAY.

THE OWNER OF THE NEIGHBORING HOUSE IS ICHIYANAGI SHIROU, A DOOR-TO-DOOR SALESMAN.

HIS WIFE WENT TO CHECK ON MRS. UDAGAWA AT AROUND 11 THAT NIGHT.

SHE SAYS THAT UDAGAWA HADN'T YET RETURNED WHEN SHE LEFT.

WE'RE STILL INVESTI-GATING WHAT HAPPENED ON THE DAY HE WAS KILLED...

THE NEIGHBOR'S WIFE WAS SO SHOCKED BY THE NEWS THAT SHE FAINTED.

AH, YES.

UDAGAWA AKEMI.

THERE WERE NO WITNESSES TO THE CRIME...

BUT THERE'S A MOUNTAIN OF CIRCUM-STANTIAL EVIDENCE.

WHAT ABOUT THE KILLER?

WHAT ABOUT ...

I DUNNO...

IT LOOKS LIKE A ROCK SOLID CASE AGAINST HER.

FIRST OF ALL ...

I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE THAT AKEMI-SAN IS THE KILLER.

IS THERE ANY POSSIBILITY THAT IT'S ALL A BIG MISTAKE?

I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE IT...

HUH?

OF COURSE, WE DON'T KNOW WHETHER AKEMI OR UDAGAWA HIMSELF BLOCKED THE DOOR.

I HEARD FROM THE INVESTIGATORS WHO WERE FIRST ON THE SCENE THAT THE FRONT DOOR WAS LOCKED AND THAT WOODEN SECURITY BARS HAD BEEN WEDGED IN TO KEEP IT FROM OPENING.

IS THERE ANY OTHER ENTRANCE TO THE HOUSE?

NOPE.

THE HOUSE WAS BUILT BETWEEN TWO CLIFFS.

IF SOMEBODY ELSE KILLED HIM, THEN AKEMI WOULD HAVE HAD TO LET THEM RUN AWAY AND THEN BLOCK OFF THE DOOR.

IF HE DID IT, THEN SHE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD HAVE KILLED HIM.

SEE?

THE HOUSE IS HERE,

SO THE SIDES OF THE HOUSE ARE COMPLETELY BLOCKED OFF BY CLIFFS.

COULD SOMEONE HAVE CLIMBED OVER THEM?

SOMEONE WITH CLIMBING EXPERIENCE, MAYBE?

THE HOUSE IS SURROUNDED BY CLIFFS ON TWO SIDES, AND THE BACK SIDE DROPS STEEPLY INTO THE OCEAN.

THERE'S NO WAY THAT SOMEBODY COULD HAVE CLIMBED UP FROM THE OCEAN SIDE, EITHER.

NOPE.

THEY'RE WAY TOO STEEP.

THEY'D NEED TO USE ROPES.

Oops!

SO EITHER THE KILLER WAS SOMEONE IN THE HOUSE, OR THE DOOR WAS LOCKED AFTER THE KILLER ESCAPED.

OF THE TWO POSSIBILITIES, I'D SAY THAT THE FORMER IS MORE LIKELY.

AND THAT WAS LOCKED FROM THE INSIDE...

THERE WAS NO WAY IN BESIDES THE FRONT DOOR...

OKAY, I GET IT.

I ADMIT IT...

IT SEEMS PRETTY UNLIKELY THAT SHE WOULD LET THE KILLER ESCAPE AND THEN LOCK THE DOOR.

BUT...

I GUESS ...

WHAT IF...

WHAT IF SHE THOUGHT SHE SAW HER FIRST HUSBAND'S GHOST?

SHE MIGHT HAVE ATTACKED UDAGAWA-SENSEI BY MISTAKE, AND THEN LOCKED THE DOOR IN FEAR...

SHE CAN'T POSSIBLY HAVE KILLED HER HUSBAND IN COLD BLOOD, RIGHT?

WAIT...

WHAT WAS AKEMI-SAN'S MENTAL STATE LAST NIGHT?

WHAT WE'VE GOT HERE IS A LOCKED ROOM MURDER MYSTERY.

REGARD-LESS OF WHO LOCKED THE DOOR,

PUFF

SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF A NOVEL.

IT DOESN'T MATTER ...?

SO IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO LOCKED THE DOOR OR WHY.

AND REGARD-LESS OF WHAT REALLY HAPPENED THAT NIGHT, THERE'S SOME-THING DEEPLY WRONG WITH THAT LADY...

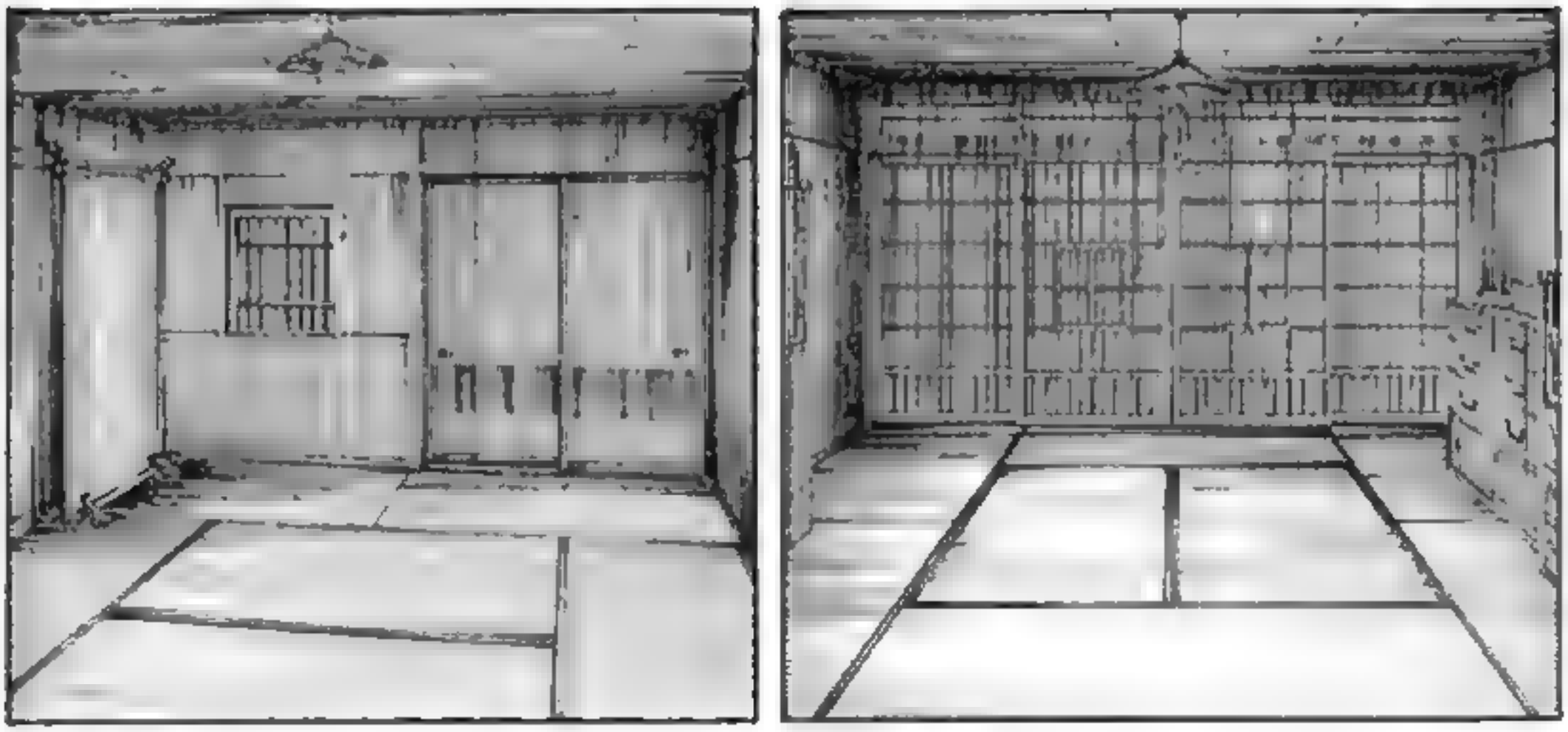
SHE AIN'T RIGHT IN THE HEAD.

SLAM!

WHEN THE COPS GOT TO THE HOUSE, THE DOOR WAS LOCKED...

YEAH.

SO THEY HAD TO BUST THEIR WAY IN.



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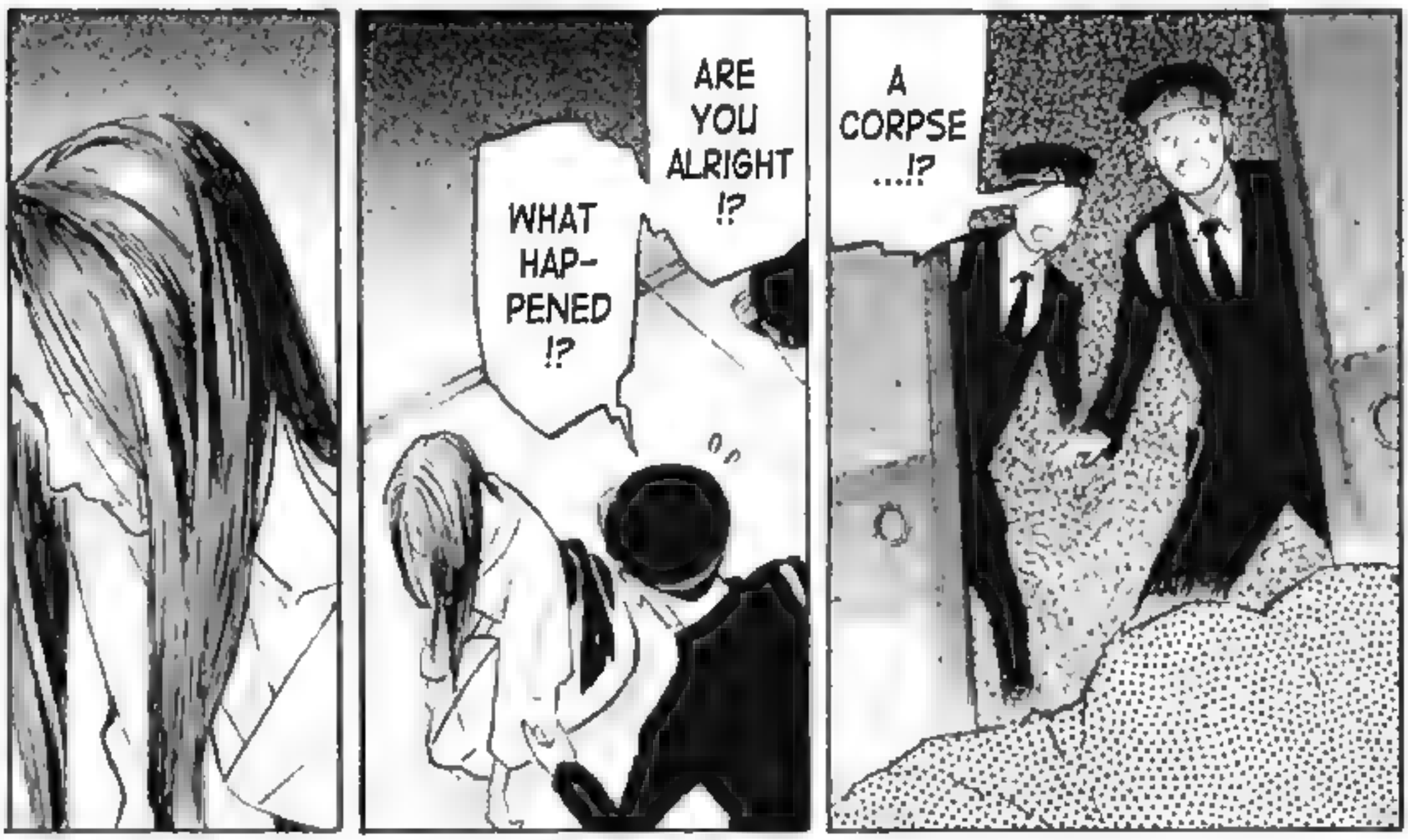

ARE YOU ALRIGHT !?
WHAT HAP- PENED !?
A CORPSE ....!?

GRIN

GASP

SHE SMILED !?

SHE ...

Akemi-san was smiling at her husband's corpse?

I don't believe it...

WHAT A BUNCH OF WIMPS.

SHE SMILED.

THE COPS WERE SO FREAKED OUT THAT THEY CALLED FOR BACKUP.

SO PLEASE ARREST ME AT ONCE!

THAT'S RIGHT, I KILLED HIM!

I...

I KILLED HIM.

WHAT DID SHE DO AFTER THAT?

SHE CON-FESSED.

I KILLED UDAGAWA TAKASHI!!

JUST DO IT!!

I'LL GET THE DEATH PENALTY, RIGHT?

ARREST ME!!

WE FOUND HER FINGER-PRINTS ON THE CORPSE'S NECK.

WHAT IF SHE WAS JUST HALLUCINATING, AND SOMEONE ELSE DID IT?

BUT... COULD SHE REALLY KILL A MAN ON HER OWN!?

OH MY GOD... AKEMI-SAN ACTUALLY DID IT?!

THE FACTS ARE PRETTY CLEAR.

SURE, I GUESS IT'S *POSSIBLE* THAT SOMEBODY ELSE KILLED UDAGAWA, BUT IT WOULD BE ONE HELL OF A COINCIDENCE.

WE COPS ARE PROFESSIONALS, YOU KNOW?

WE CAN TELL FROM THE FORENSIC EVIDENCE THAT HE WAS STRANGLED TO DEATH.

WHAT IF SHE TOUCHED HIM AFTER HE WAS ALREADY DEAD?

YOU'VE GOTTA BE OUT OF YOUR MIND TO KILL SOMEBODY, DON'T YOU?

THAT DOESN'T CHANGE WHAT SHE DID.

BUT...

BUT...

WHAT IF SHE WASN'T IN CONTROL OF HER-SELF AT THE TIME OF THE KILLING!?

A NORMAL PERSON WOULD TRY TO RUN AWAY OR COVER IT UP SOMEHOW, RIGHT?

SHE WASN'T IN HER RIGHT MIND!

IF AKEMI DIDN'T KILL THE GUY, THEN WHO DID?

IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.

.....!

IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE.

THEN I GUESS AKEMI WALKED IN...

BUT WHY WERE HER FINGERPRINTS ON HIS THROAT?

MEANWHILE, THE KILLER TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO RUN AWAY, AND AKEMI LOCKED THE DOOR AFTER THEM.

THEN SHE WENT BACK TO HER HUSBAND'S CORPSE TO PATIENTLY WAIT FOR THE POLICE TO SHOW UP.

THE KILLER WOULD HAVE HAD TO ENTER THE HOUSE THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR, WHICH WOULD MEAN THAT IT WASN'T LOCKED AT THE TIME.

THEN THEY KILLED UDAGAWA IN THE LIVING ROOM.

PEOPLE WHO ARE SUFFERING FROM SEVERE MENTAL ILLNESS DON'T ALWAYS ACT THE WAY WE'D EXPECT THEM TO.

EVEN IF SHE DIDN'T KILL HIM, HER BEHAVIOR WAS SUSPICIOUS AS HELL.

SO THERE MAY HAVE BEEN NO LOGIC TO HER ACTIONS...

He's right...

DAMN IT...

WAIT ...

THERE'S A CERTAIN LOGIC TO THEIR BEHAVIOR... IT JUST ISN'T *NORMAL* LOGIC.

A PERSON MAY NOT EVEN BE ABLE TO EXPLAIN THEIR OWN BEHAVIOR DURING A PSYCHOTIC EPISODE.

UM ...

WHAT DO YOU THINK, SEKIGUCHI-SENSEI?

WELL... THAT'S *SORT OF* TRUE.

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED THAT POSSIBILITY?

WHAT IF...

WHAT IF SOMEONE WHO KNEW THAT AKEMI-SAN WAS MENTALLY ILL TRIED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HER FRAGILE MENTAL STATE?

WHAT IF SHE WAS BEING MANIPULATED?

SO THE PERSON WHO PLANNED IT ALL WOULD BE THE REAL CULPRIT, RIGHT?

NOT QUITE.

AKEMI-SAN WOULDN'T BE AWARE OF WHAT SHE WAS DOING.

EVEN IF THAT'S THE CASE, SHE'D STILL BE THE KILLER, RIGHT?

AKEMI-SAN MAY HAVE PHYSICALLY COMMITTED THE MURDER, BUT THERE COULD HAVE BEEN ANOTHER PERSON WHO MANIPULATED HER INTO DOING IT.

THAT'S ...

AND THAT THEY KNEW AKEMI WELL ENOUGH TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HER ILLNESS?

IN OTHER WORDS ...

YOU'RE SAYING THAT SOMEBODY BRAINWASHED AKEMI INTO KILLING HER HUSBAND, LOCKING THE DOOR, AND LYING TO THE POLICE?

CALM DOWN.

LOG BOOK

ACTUALLY, OFFICER NAGATO ALREADY ASKED HER IF SHE'D BEEN TOLD TO DO IT BY SOMEBODY ELSE.

IF THAT'S TRUE, THEN IT'S UNFORGIVABLE!

USING A MENTALLY ILL PERSON AS A HUMAN WEAPON IS...

IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG TO FIGURE IT OUT...

YEAH.

ARE THE POLICE AWARE OF AKEMI-SAN'S ILLNESS?

KIBA-SAN,

SHE STARTED TALKING ABOUT HOW HER FIRST HUSBAND CAME BACK TO LIFE AND SHE KILLED HIM OVER AND OVER.

WHEN THE OFFICER TRIED TO ASK QUESTIONS,

AND THE RESULT IS...

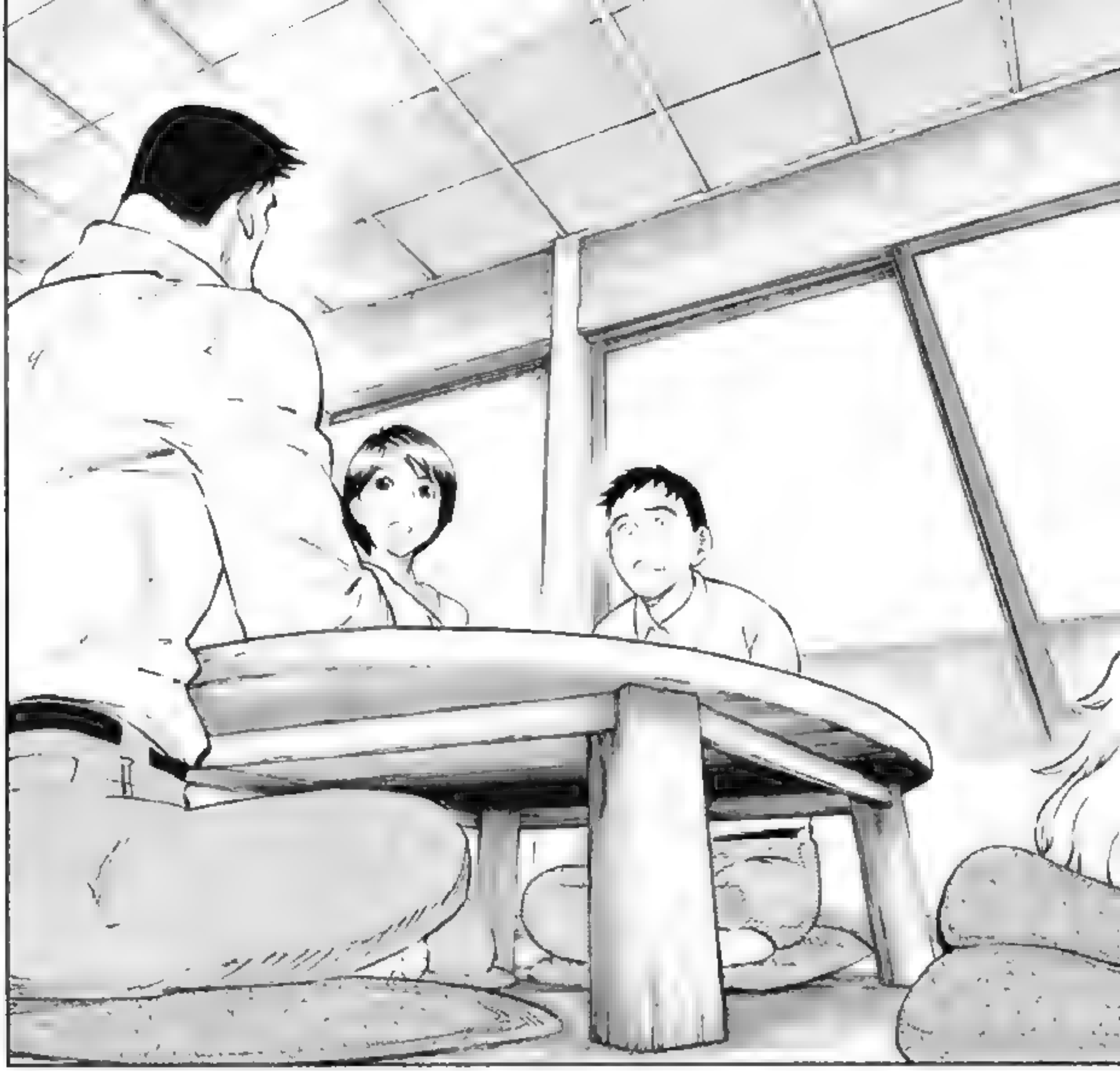
THE OFFICIAL RESULTS AREN'T BACK FROM THE DOCTOR YET, BUT WE HAVE HIS PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT.

THEY ENDED UP GIVING HER A PSYCHIATRIC EVALUATION.

RE-ALLY?

AKEMI IS ALMOST CERTAINLY ...

FEIGNING MADNESS.



IT MEANS THAT SHE'S ONLY PRETEND-ING TO BE INSANE.

What does that mean?

FEIGN-ING...

SHE WAS FAKING IT ...?

And I totally fell for it...

THE POLICE THINK THAT HER "CRAZY" BEHAVIOR IS SOMETHING SHE CAN TURN ON AND OFF AT WILL.

BY TRICKING PEOPLE INTO THINKING THAT SHE WAS INSANE, SHE COULD GET OFF WITH A MUCH LIGHTER PUNISHMENT.

HM... I DON'T THINK SO.

SHE'S BEEN FAKING MADNESS FOR A LONG TIME NOW.

SHE'S BEEN PLANNING THIS.

SHE COULD HAVE LOCKED THE DOOR AND MADE SURE THAT HER FINGER-PRINTS WOULD BE FOUND ON HER HUSBAND'S NECK...

KIBA-SAN, WHAT IF...

WHAT IF AKEMI-SAN IS TRYING TO PROTECT THE REAL KILLER?

HM, I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT...

BUT THAT WOULD MEAN SHE'S BEEN PRETENDING TO BE INSANE FOR SEVERAL MONTHS.

THAT'S A LOT OF WORK...

AKEMI PRETENDED TO BE CRAZY FOR YEARS, WAITING FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO MURDER HER HUSBAND.

UDAGAWA THOUGHT HIS WIFE WAS ILL, SO HE KEPT HER SHELTERED FROM THE REST OF SOCIETY...

WHICH JUST MADE IT EASIER TO MAINTAIN THE DECEPTION.

BASED ON WHAT YOU TWO TOLD ME, IT LOOKS LIKE THERE'S ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO PROVE THAT IT WAS A PRE-MEDITATED CRIME.

IT SURE IS.

THAT'S WHY SHE HAD TO KILL HIM AFTER HE TALKED TO YOU.

...DO YOU THINK SHE KILLED UDAGAWA-SENSEI BECAUSE HE TALKED TO US...?

BUT ...

BUT I...

SHE'D BEEN FAKING IT FOR MONTHS...

SHE COULDN'T RISK BEING EXPOSED.

...IT'S POSSI-BLE.

YOU TOLD UDAGAWA THAT YOU WERE GOING TO CONSULT WITH A PSYCHIATRIC SPECIALIST, RIGHT?

THE TOKYO POLICE MIGHT NEED TO ASK YOU SOME QUESTIONS, BUT YOU CAN JUST STOP BY THE STATION.

THE INVESTI-GATION IS ONGOING, THOUGH, SO WE'RE WAITING FOR MORE INFO FROM THE KANAGAWA POLICE.

THAT'S WHAT THE POLICE BELIEVE, ANYWAY.

YOU'RE USELESS!

NOBODY ASKED FOR YOUR OPINION!

You're just going to leave it at that?

The police are so useless!

What a load of crap!

You were just a plate of tofu in your past life, so you wouldn't understand!

We're dealing with the mysteries of life and death here!

Her first husband came back from the dead!

DID THE POLICE FIND OUT ANY-THING ABOUT AKEMI-SAN'S FIRST HUSBAND ...?

THAT'S RIGHT ...

Of course, she must have faked the "haunting" too...

DID SHE CONFESS TO KILLING HER FIRST HUSBAND?

THE POLICE WERE ABLE TO CONFIRM VIA FINGERPRINT ANALYSIS THAT "UDAGAWA AKEMI" AND "SATA AKEMI" ARE THE SAME PERSON.

OH YEAH.

AKEMI WAS IMPLICATED IN THE MURDER OF HER FIRST HUSBAND, SATA NOBUYOSHI, EIGHT YEARS AGO.

BUT DID SHE SAY ANYTHING ABOUT THE MURDER OF HER FIRST HUSBAND?

NOT THAT I KNOW OF.

IT LOOKS LIKE THERE WAS A WARRANT OUT FOR HER ARREST FOR THE MURDER OF SATA NOBUYOSHI... AND THE MURDER OF MUNAKATA TAMIE.

WAIT A MINUTE, LET ME CHECK THE INVESTI-GATION RECORDS ...

NO...

WELL ...

HUH?

DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S STRANGE?

IF SHE WANTED TO CONVINCE THE POLICE THAT SHE WAS A PSYCHOTIC KILLER, WHY WOULDN'T SHE CONFESS TO THAT TOO?

BUT SHE'S NEVER SAID ANYTHING ABOUT THE ORIGINAL MURDER OF SATA NOBUYOSHI EIGHT YEARS AGO, RIGHT?

AKEMI-SAN CLAIMED THAT HER HUSBAND HAD RETURNED FROM THE DEAD, AND THAT SHE'D KILLED HIM AGAIN...

BUT EVEN THOUGH SHE WAS THE PRIME SUSPECT IN THAT CASE, IN THE END THE POLICE DECIDED THAT SOMEBODY ELSE MUST HAVE DONE IT.

WELL, I GUESS THAT IS A BIT WEIRD.

SHE MIGHT AS WELL COME CLEAN, RIGHT?

That's right... The blood in the garden...

Anyway, what about the uniformed stalker!?

That's just shoddy detective work!

Even I was ready to go to Nagano for this case!

What about the blood in the garden!?

So what you're saying is that cops can't even manage a simple investigation!

COPS ARE KINDA OLD-FASHIONED, YOU KNOW...

MAYBE THEY DIDN'T INVESTIGATE AS HARD AS THEY SHOULD HAVE.

BOSS ...

DID THE POLICE INSPECT THE GARDEN?

But if she was pretending to be delusional, then why would she fake physical evidence to prove that the delusion was real?

Was that, part of her deception too?

Did Akemi-san intentionally splash blood all over the garden?

THEY WOULD HAVE INSPECTED THE WHOLE HOUSE, THOUGH...

THERE'S NOTHING IN THE REPORT ABOUT THAT.

BLOOD IN THE GAR-DEN?

PIIP

PIIP

MAYBE THERE NEVER WAS ANY BLOOD?

!?

BUT UDAGAWA-SENSEI SAID THAT HE SAW THE BLOOD TOO...

MAYBE THEY CLEANED IT UP?

WHY WOULD HE LIE ABOUT SOMETHING LIKE THAT...?

MAN, THIS CASE JUST KEEPS GETTING WEIRDER...

HM, THAT'S TRUE...

HE DID MAKE IT SOUND LIKE THERE WAS AN AWFUL LOT OF BLOOD.

BUT THEY PROBABLY COULD HAVE RINSED OFF THE GARDEN STONES, AND IT WOULD JUST SOAK INTO THE DIRT.

ANYWAY, WOULDN'T THAT BE HARD TO CLEAN UP?

HE SAID THERE WAS BLOOD ALL OVER THE PLACE, RIGHT?

RIGHT, SENSEI?

UM...

WA HA HA HA HA

You'll be out of a job soon!

That's my A-chan!

Unlike you, she knows how to think outside the box!

HUH...

I GUESS RAIN COULD HAVE WASHED THE STONES CLEAN, TOO...

ANYWAY, THIS ISN'T EVEN MY CASE.

THE KANAGAWA COPS ARE IN CHARGE.

SURE, I'VE GOT SOME THEORIES, BUT...

I DON'T WANNA HEAR THAT FROM A SOCIALLY RETARDED DUMBASS WHO'S NEVER HAD A REAL JOB!

The Boss has a theory..?

grin

grin

...IT'S NOT QUITE A THEORY YET.

WHAT KIND OF THEORIES?

UM ...

WELL ...

ONE THING THAT STILL BOTHERS ME...

LIKE WHAT?

THE KANAGAWA COPS JUST WANT TO CLOSE THE CASE...

BUT I STILL HAVE A LOT OF QUESTIONS.

SPECIFI-CALLY, UDAGAWA'S STOMACH CONTENTS.

IS THE AUTOPSY REPORT.

THE LAST THING UDAGAWA ATE...

NONE OF THE OTHER OFFICERS THOUGHT IT WAS A BIG DEAL, BUT I THOUGHT IT WAS WEIRD.

...

HUH?

...

WAS CHICKEN HOT POT.

BUT THAT WAS ON THE NIGHT OF THE FUNERAL!

WE HAD CHICKEN HOT POT TOGETHER IN TOKYO

...

CHICKEN HOT POT?

WAS HE ASLEEP THE WHOLE DAY?

IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE.

ISN'T THAT WEIRD?

WHICH MEANS THAT UDAGAWA DIDN'T EAT ANYTHING FOR A FULL DAY AFTER HE RETURNED HOME.

They probably said something like *"Well, maybe he just wasn't hungry."*

Right?

You know how cops are, A-chan!

They always go for the easy answers!

WELL ...

YOU'RE RIGHT, THAT'S WEIRD...

WHAT DID THE KANAGAWA POLICE THINK ABOUT IT?

IT'S DEFINITELY ABNORMAL.

ANYWAY, THERE'S ONE MORE THING...

ONE MORE THING THAT I THOUGHT WAS EVEN STRANGER.

Even stranger than this?

Am I right~?

GOD, IT HURTS TO SAY THAT.

SIGH

YES, REIJIROU, YOU'RE RIGHT.

WE STILL DON'T KNOW WHO REPORTED THE MURDER TO THE POLICE.

NONE OF THIS...

MAKES ANY GODDAMNED SENSE...

YEAH...

BUT THAT'S WHERE THINGS GET WEIRD.

SOMEONE MUST HAVE CALLED THE POLICE, RIGHT?

A-chan and I went to Eno-san's office that day...

THE 3RD...

HAYAMA POLICE STAT

THE INITIAL REPORT CAME IN AT 8AM ON THE 3RD.

AT FIRST, THEY THOUGHT IT WAS A PRANK.

The place is...

Something big just happened.

You'd better come see.

HELLO, THIS IS THE HAYAMA POLICE STATION.

There's been an incident.

The place is...

BUT SOMEONE CALLED AGAIN THAT EVENING.

HELLO, YOU'VE REACHED THE KANAGAWA POLICE STATION.

WE'VE BEEN BUSY EVER SINCE THE SEVERED HEAD CASE!

HA HA HA

ANOTHER PRANK CALL, HUH?

CAN YOU SEND SOME GUYS TO GO CHECK IT OUT?

WE JUST GOT A STRANGE PHONE CALL...

THEY SAID THAT "THERE'S BEEN AN INCIDENT."

HEY, IS THIS THE HAYAMA STATION?

YES SIR. UNDER-STOOD.

WHERE TO?

OH, I SEE.

THAT'S IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, ISN'T IT?

There's been an incident!

Go now!!

MAN, IT'S LATE ...

I'LL GO IN THE MORNING ...

RING

WHAT THEY SAW FREAKED THEM OUT SO MUCH THAT THEY CALLED HEAD-QUARTERS FOR SUPPORT.

SO THEY DISPATCHED SOME OFFICERS TO THE SITE, AND THEY DISCOVERED THE MURDER.

BUT HOW DID THEY KNOW WHAT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN?

WHOEVER MADE THOSE REPORTS ...

WANTED TO MAKE SURE THAT A LOT OF OFFICERS WERE ON THE SCENE.

BUT HE KEPT CALLING UNTIL THE POLICE SHOWED UP...

WHICH MEANS THAT HE MUST HAVE BEEN WATCHING THE HOUSE.

HOW DID HE KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON IN AN INNER ROOM OF THAT ISOLATED, PRACTICALLY UNREACHABLE HOUSE?

THE FIRST REPORT CAME THE MORNING AFTER THE MURDER.

WAS THE CALLER A WOMAN?

NO, A MAN.

SO THE REPORT MUST HAVE COME FROM AN OUT-SIDER.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHY THIS IS A PROBLEM FOR US?

NOPE.

WAS IT THE NEIGHBOR? ICHIYANAGI-SAN?

SHE SAID THAT HER HUSBAND DIDN'T MAKE THE CALL.

HOW DO YOU KNOW?

WA HA HA HA

A crime was reported, but they did nothing for a whole day!

The public would be furious if they found out!

Isn't that right, Shuu-chan?

It makes the police look bad!

Of course, Shuu-chan!

SWIPE

DAMN IT...

MAYBE THE CALLER WAS A PSYCHIC OR SOME-THING?

YES, REIJIROU, YOU'RE RIGHT...

LUCKILY, THE SUSPECT WAS STILL AT THE HOUSE, OR WE REALLY WOULD HAVE BEEN IN DEEP SHIT.

..That can't be it

BUT THEN WHY WOULD HE BETRAY HER?

HE MUST HAVE KNOWN THAT IF SHE GOT ARRESTED, SHE'D IMPLICATE HIM IN THE CRIME.

WHY WOULD AKEMI PROTECT AN ACCOMPLICE WHO RATTED HER OUT?

MAYBE THE CALLER WAS AKEMI-SAN'S ACCOMPLICE?

HE WAS THERE, SO HE KNEW WHAT HAP-PENED?

Makes sense...

None of this...

That's right...

There has to be something supernatural going on here!

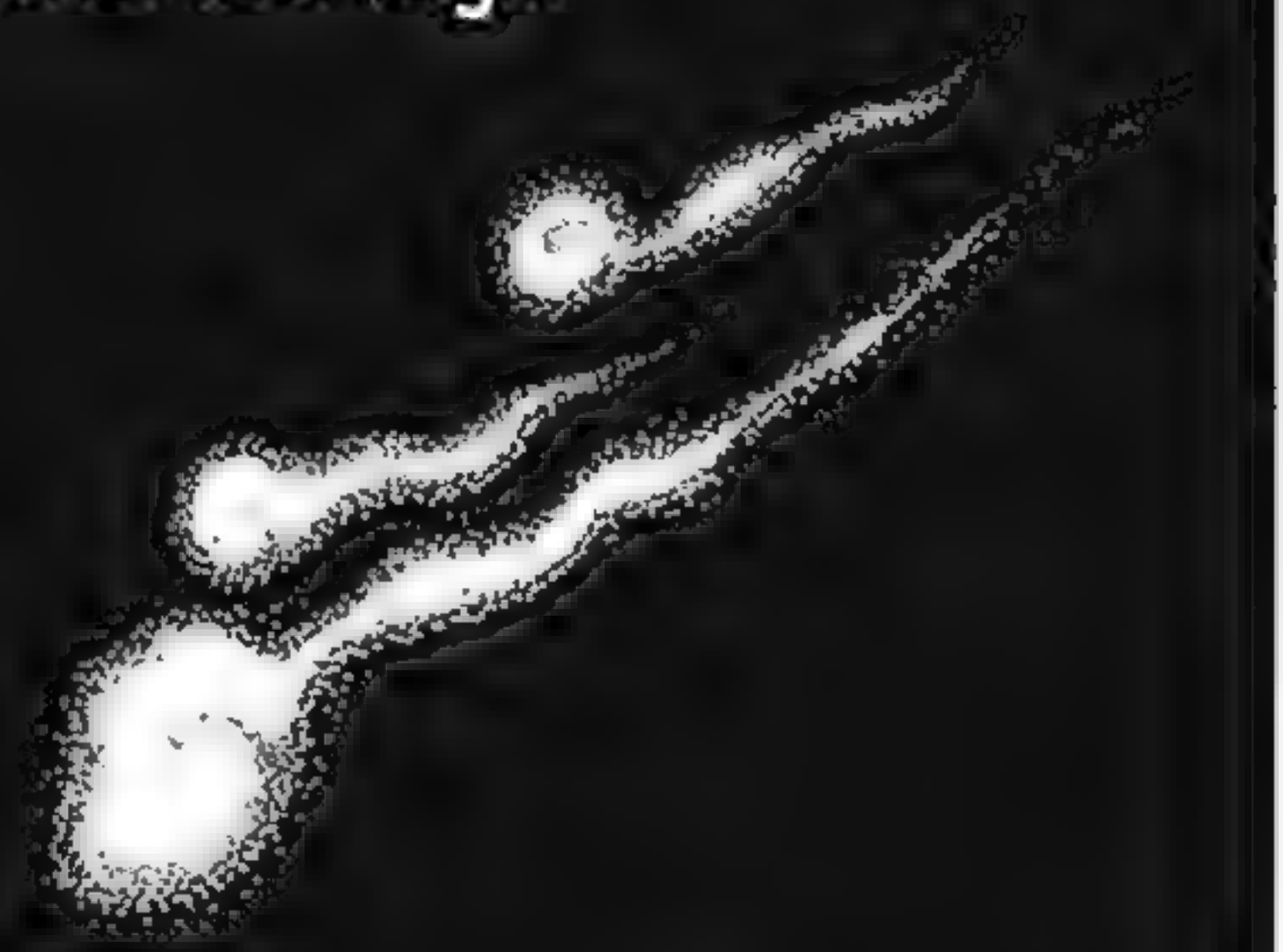
And then there's the stuff about past lives and people returning from the dead...

Actually, that's the only explanation that *does* make sense.

On the surface, it seems like a straightforward murder case...

But the more you think about it, the more you start to notice the contradictions in the story.

Something
otherworldly...



THAT IS THE DUMBEST THING I'VE EVER HEARD.

I mean, that dead guy just kept coming back to get murdered again and again!

So when he walked in on his ex-wife killing some other guy, he got pissed off and called the cops!

Ooh, I know!

Maybe the headless corpse called in the tip!

The headless husband could be a clue, so we can't just ignore it.

It's not like you have a better explanation, you useless cop.

HUH ...

We still don't have any solid information...

DOES HE KNOW ABOUT THE MURDER?

UM...

I DON'T THINK SO.

Hey, Sekiguchi!

What's Kyougoku been up to lately?

Speaking of spooky shit...

MY BROTHER IS ON HIS WAY BACK TO TOKYO.

KYOU-GOKU-DOU?

HUH?

YES.

CARE-FUL?

MAYBE BECAUSE THE HOUSE IS SO ISOLATED THAT IT'S CUT OFF EVEN FROM THE NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBORS?

BUT... HE DOES KNOW ABOUT THE CASE.

HE SAID THAT IIDAGAWA-SENSEI SHOULD BE CAREFUL AT HOME.

AND...

DON'T YOU REMEMBER? HE'S THE OWNER OF THE LIQUOR COMPANY WHERE AKEMI-SAN USED TO WORK.

OH, RIGHT.

BUT I'M NOT SURE WHY MY BROTHER WAS INTERESTED IN HIM...

鴨田酒造

OH, AND HE SAID THAT WE SHOULD LOOK INTO KAMOTA SHUUZOU.

KAMOTA? WHO'S THAT?

Huh?

Apron: "Kamota Liquors"

You're a second-rate detective!

HEH.

YOU SHOULD LEAVE THIS CASE TO THE PROS -

IT'S WAY TOO MUCH FOR A SECOND-RATE DETECTIVE AND A NOVELIST TO HANDLE.

WELL, YOUR BROTHER MAY BE A WEIRDO, BUT HE USUALLY HAS GOOD INSTINCTS.

Huh? Who's that?

THERE'S SOMEONE AT THE DOOR.

SORRY TO INTERRUPT, BUT...

GOOD QUESTION...

IN MOST CASES LIKE THIS, IT'S EITHER BECAUSE OF MONEY OR A LOVE AFFAIR.

UM... IF AKEMI-SAN IS THE KILLER, WHAT WAS HER MOTIVE?

HUH?
WHAT ARE THE POLICE DOING HERE?

HE SAID HE'S FROM THE POLICE...

UM, HE SAID HE WAS FROM THE KANA-GAWA POLICE ...

KANA-GAWA?

WAIT FOR ME!

HEY!

THEY'VE GOT NO BUSINESS COMING HERE...

I'LL SEE WHAT HE WANTS.

MY LEG FELL ASLEEP ...

ARE YOU OKAY?

UM ...

YOU!!

WHAT KIND OF INVESTI-GATION?

IS IT THE GOLDEN SKULL CASE?

THIS GUY'S AN OLD WAR BUDDY OF MINE!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE!?

THIS AIN'T YOUR JURIS-DICTION!

I'M TRYING TO CONDUCT AN INVESTI-GATION!

WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE!?

Wait a minute... That man is...

SEKIGUCHI-SAN, WE MET BACK IN AUGUST, DIDN'T WE?

YEAH... RIGHT...

INSPECTOR ISHII OF THE NATIONAL POLICE KANAGAWA BUREAU.

HUH?

...NO, WHY?

SEKIGUCHI-SAN, I HAVE SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU.

FIRST OF ALL, HAVE YOU BEEN TO ZUSHI RECENTLY?

He was in charge of investigating the "Mouryou's Box" case...

But he got demoted because of Kiba...

N-NO, I'M FINE...

WHAT'S WRONG? COME ON, LET'S TALK.

WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE WORKING TOGETHER, RIGHT?

I SEE.

TCH ...

YOU'RE ACTING WEIRD.

HUH?

TH-THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU...!

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

WHAT ARE YOU *REALLY* DOING HERE?

ISN'T IT A LITTLE STRANGE FOR AN INSPECTOR TO BE INVESTIGATING A CASE ALONE?

But now he's getting bullied!!

Haha, that cop is used to bullying other people...

WH...

H...

WHAT !?

HOW DID YOU...

SHOCK

None of his subordinates respect him, so he's here on his own!!

HEH HEH

SO THAT'S HOW IT IS, HUH?

Sheesh, those two really can't stand each other...

TH-TH-THAT'S NOT TRUE!

YOU'RE WRONG!

YOU MUST HAVE PULLED SOME STRINGS TO GET YOUR OLD JOB BACK...

I BET THAT PISSED OFF YOUR COL-LEAGUES, RIGHT?

I HAD TO VISIT TOKYO DUE TO AN UNRELATED MATTER, SO I THOUGHT I'D STOP BY TO SPEAK TO YOU...

ANY-WAY...

I'M CURRENTLY IN CHARGE OF INVESTI-GATING THE ZUSHI BAY DECAPITATION CASE.

SO BASICALLY, YOU THOUGHT YOU'D MAKE US SOLVE THE CASE AND THEN TAKE ALL THE CREDIT?

OKAY ...

ANYHOW... SEKIGUCHI-SAN, WOULD YOU TAKE A LOOK AT THIS PHOTO?

... SORRY.

COUGH

THAT'S NOT TRUE! IT'S A COOPER-ATIVE INVESTI-GATION!

A KIMONO?

HUH? IT'S...

AND ...

A ROCK?

?

UM... NO?

DO YOU RECOGNIZE THEM?

BUT WHEN WE WENT TO INVESTIGATE, WE FOUND NO HEAD...

INSTEAD, WE FOUND THESE CLOTHES.

YESTERDAY, WE RECIEVED ANOTHER REPORT OF A SEVERED HEAD FLOATING IN THE AREA WHERE THE TAKOEGAWA RIVER MEETS ZUSHI BAY.

302 Yamato-cho,
Nakano, Tokyo

SIGH

I SEE...

THEN HOW ABOUT THIS?

THAT'S RIGHT!

MY ADD-RESS!

HUH? THIS IS...

IF THE STONE HAD BEEN JUST A LITTLE HEAVIER, IT WOULD HAVE SUNK.

WE FOUND A BUNDLE OF CLOTHING WRAPPED AROUND A STONE FLOATING IN ZUSHI BAY.

AT FIRST, WE THOUGHT IT WAS ANOTHER SEVERED HEAD.

!

THE NOTE WAS FOUND INSIDE THE CLOTHING.

AND I REMEMBERED THAT IT WAS YOUR ADDRESS.

SEKI-GUCHI-SENSEI, LOOK!

HUH? WHAT IS IT?

THESE CLOTHES ...

I RECOGNIZE THEM...

THE OTHER DAY...

UDAGAWA-SENSEI WAS WEARING THIS EXACT OUTFIT!

.....

HUH?

THAT'S RIGHT ...

I GAVE MY ADDRESS ...

TO IIDA-GAWA-SENSEI ...

SURE, IT'S NO TROUBLE...

DO YOU MIND GIVING ME YOUR CONTACT INFOR-MATION?

302 Yamato-cho, Nakano, Tokyo

UDA-GAWA !?

THE SAME UDAGAWA TAKASHI WHO WAS MURDERED!?

ISHII-SAN, ARE YOU WORKING ON THE UDAGAWA CASE TOO?

WELL... NOT EXACTLY.

SEVERAL OF MY INVESTI-GATORS ARE WORKING ON BOTH CASES, THOUGH.

AND SINCE WE'RE A SMALL DEPARTMENT, IT'S ONLY NATURAL FOR THERE TO BE SOME SPILLOVER...

DO YOU... DO YOU KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT UDAGAWA'S MURDER!?

THOSE TWO - SEKIGUCHI AND CHUUZENJI - WERE ACQUAINTED WITH UDAGAWA.

ACTUALLY, HE ATE HIS LAST MEAL WHEN HE WAS WITH THEM...

IF THERE'S ANYTHING THEY CAN ADD TO THE INVESTIGATION, I'M SURE THEY'LL HELP.

PROBABLY? IT'S HARD TO SAY.

No, it's definitely the same kimono.

UM ...

HEY,

ARE YOU SURE THAT THE KIMONO IN THAT PHOTO IS WHAT UDAGAWA WAS WEARING WHEN YOU SAW HIM LAST?

UM... IF IT IS HIS, WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

I can see what they saw!

YOU NEVER EVEN SAW HIM!!

OR DID SOMEONE TAKE THE CLOTHES FROM HIS HOUSE AND DISCARD THEM?

DID HE CHANGE CLOTHES ON THE WAY HOME?

WHY WOULD UDAGAWA-SENSEI'S CLOTHES BE FLOATING IN THE OCEAN?

UGH ...

WHEN I RECOGNIZED YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS, I HAD A BAD FEELING ABOUT ALL THIS...

NOT AGAIN ...

This case keeps getting weirder and weirder

Damn it...

HEY, ISHII-SAN...

WHY DON'T WE TRADE INFOR-MATION?

.....

EH?

NEITHER OF US IS SHERLOCK HOLMES. IF WE DON'T COOPERATE, WE'RE NOT GOING TO GET ANYWHERE. COME ON, LET'S SWAP STORIES.

Is he trying to rope Inspector Ishii into this..?

GLARE

FINE. LET'S TALK.

.....

HM ...

ALRIGHT.

THERE ARE SO MANY CONTRADICTIONS IN THIS CASE...

MAYBE IF WE THINK THROUGH IT LOGICALLY, WE CAN FIGURE IT OUT.

LET'S GET OUR FACTS STRAIGHT.

... WAIT.

MAYBE THE FRIEND WAS WAS CONCERNED ENOUGH TO CALL THE POLICE?

THAT WOULD EXPLAIN THAT PART OF THE MYSTERY, AT LEAST...

MAYBE HE HAD AN UNEASY FEELING, AND HE TOLD A FRIEND THAT HE WAS WORRIED FOR HIS SAFETY?

BUT WE DON'T KNOW WHAT THE VICTIM WAS DOING ON THE DAY HE DIED.

UDAGAWA AKEMI CONFESSED TO THE MURDER.

IT WAS A LONG SHOT...

BUT THERE WASN'T A TELEPHONE IN HIS HOME, SO HIS OPTIONS WERE LIMITED.

PERHAPS HE WAS AFRAID AND TRIED TO CALL FOR HELP?

HE TRUSTED SEKIGUCHI-SAN, AFTER ALL.

MAYBE HE'S THE ONE WHO HID THE ADDRESS INSIDE THE CLOTHES.

IF HE WAS WORRIED ABOUT HIS MURDEROUS WIFE, THAT COULD EXPLAIN HIS LACK OF AN APPETITE...

MY OFFICERS WOULD HAVE SEEN IT.

IF THERE WAS BLOOD IN THE GARDEN,

THAT MUST HAVE BEEN A HOAX.

WHAT ABOUT THE BLOOD IN THE GARDEN?

THERE ARE JUST TOO MANY CONTRA-DICTIONS.

I CAN'T MAKE SENSE OF IT.

...OH, IT'S NO USE.

THAT DOESN'T REALLY MAKE SENSE EITHER.

MAYBE HE WAS CARRIED AWAY BY AKEMI'S STORY?

YOU'RE THE INVESTI-GATOR IN CHARGE...

I WONDER IF THE GOLDEN SKULL CASE IS CONNECTED IN ANY WAY?

WHAT ABOUT THE MURDER EIGHT YEARS AGO?

HNPH

OF COURSE, ALL OF THE SUPER-NATURAL ELEMENTS ARE OBVIOUSLY NON-SENSE.

THE RUMORS COULD HAVE INSPIRED HER TO MAKE UP A STORY ABOUT BE-HEADINGS.

MAYBE HER "MADNESS" WAS INFLUENCED BY THE GOLDEN SKULL STORY?

IT'S POSSIBLE.

AS EXPECTED FROM YOU...

AN OPEN AND SHUT CASE.

THE CASE IS STILL UN-SOLVED, THOUGH.

THE OTHER WOMAN KILLED AKEMI'S HUSBAND, SO AKEMI KILLED HER.

SHE CON-FESSED, DIDN'T SHE?

BUT IT HAPPENED BACK IN 1944...

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WAR.

PEOPLE WERE DYING, AND THE POLICE WERE TOO BUSY TO GO LOOKING FOR ONE WOMAN.

BY THE WAY, ISHII-SAN...

HOW'S THE GOLDEN SKULL INVESTIGATION COMING ALONG?

!

DON'T BE SO MODEST!

OH, HARDLY! IT'S JUST BASIC DEDUCTION.

He's just flattering him...

FIDGET

FIDGET

FIDGET

I CAN'T GET SOLID WITNESS TESTIMONY, MUCH LESS A CONFESSION!

THE PEOPLE OF HAYAMA ARE ALL UNEDUCATED REDNECKS...

THEY DON'T KNOW ANYTHING.

TCH ...

...IF I COULD SOLVE THAT, I WOULDN'T BE HERE!

PEOPLE OF THE WORLD

WINTER EDITION

You're kind of a huge jerk.

Maybe they hate you as much as you hate them?

A DETECTIVE!? TCH! ONE OF THOSE NO-GOOD PRIVATE DETECTIVES WHO ARE ONLY GOOD AT SNIFFING OUT MONEY!

HE'S A DETEC-TIVE.

K-KIBA-KUN! WHO IS THIS INEXCUSABLY RUDE MAN!?

But unfor-tunately, I can't smell money.

PEOPLE OF TH RLD

I'm a detective, not a dog.

I guess you could say that I'm pretty good at tracking down missing people and objects,

DON'T MIND HIM, ISHII-SAN. HE'S AN IDIOT.

GRR

WE'RE JUST AMATEURS, AFTER ALL... YOUR INSIGHT WOULD BE INVALUABLE.

ANYWAY, I'M REALLY INTERESTED IN HEARING YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE GOLDEN SKULL CASE!

The golden skull case...

Recently, a gold-painted skull was seen floating in Zushi Bay.

Soon after, witnesses saw skulls that still had some skin and hair attached... and finally, they found a freshly severed head.

It sounds like a ghost story.

WELL... I GUESS IT CAN'T HURT.

Sheesh, a little flattery and this guy is willing to spill confidential police info...

Typical petty bureaucrat.

I can't believe this bizarre case is in the hands of such a small-minded guy...

I can't help but be interested.

AFTER ABOUT SIX DAYS IN THE WATER, A CORPSE IS COMPLETELY UNRECOG-NIZABLE.

WELL, WE CAN'T BE SURE THAT ALL OF THE INCIDENTS ARE RELATED.

SO,

WERE YOU ABLE TO DETERMINE THE IDENTITY OF THOSE SEVERED HEADS?

JUDGING BY ITS CONDITION, IT HAD BEEN DEAD FOR AROUND TEN DAYS.

IT'S HARD TO SAY.

AND THEN, ON DECEMBER 1ST, WE FOUND A WHOLE CORPSE IN THE WATER...

THAT WAS BACK IN SEPT-EMBER.

THE FIRST SKULL CAUSED A HUGE COMMOTION WHEN IT WAS DIS-COVERED ...

INSTEAD OF ROTTING, THE CORPSE SAPONIFIES.

EVEN THE EYES MAY STILL BE INTACT A MONTH AFTER DEATH.

YES.

WHEN A CORPSE IS SUBMERGED IN COLD WATER, THE RATE OF DECOM-POSITION SLOWS.

That info hasn't been made public yet!

IS IT DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE THE TIME OF DEATH?

IT'S NOT LIKE A SEVERED HEAD MAGICALLY TURNS INTO A GOLDEN SKULL.

WELL, YOU'VE GOT A POINT THERE, ISHII-SAN.

THE SCOPE OF THIS INVESTI-GATION IS WAY TOO BROAD!

I'M EXHAUSTED.

sigh

SO BASICALLY, WE HAVE NO IDEA IF IT'S RELATED TO THE GOLDEN SKULL CASE AT ALL...

IT COULD BE A SERIAL KILLER...

BUT IT COULD ALSO BE A COPYCAT MURDER.

OR JUST A COINCIDENCE.

WELL, ASSUMING THAT THE WITNESS TESTIMONY IS CORRECT, SO FAR THERE HAVE BEEN FOUR SEVERED HEADS FOUND.

I KNOW!

IT MAKES NO SENSE!

But still...

Four murders in two months in a little town like that?

THUMP

INSTEAD OF FOCUSING ON RUMORS AND UNRELIABLE WITNESSES, WE OUGHT TO BE LOOKING FOR THE REST OF THE BODIES!

I WISH MY COLL-EAGUES WERE AS CLEVER AS YOU!

MY THOUGHTS EXACTLY!

I guess he's under a lot of pressure to solve the case on his own, though...

He needs to rebuild his reputation after what happened in the "Mouryou's Box" case.

YOU KNOW THAT THE TOKYO POLICE ARE WORKING TOGETHER WITH THE KANAGAWA POLICE ON THE FUTAGOYAMA MASS SUICIDE INCIDENT, RIGHT?

BY THE WAY...

FUTAGO-YAMA IS NEAR ZUSHI...

WHY DON'T I STOP BY AND DO A LITTLE INVESTI-GATING?

YEAH. IT'S A TRAGIC INCIDENT, ISN'T IT?

WE DID MANAGE TO IDENTIFY TWO OF THE DECEASED, THOUGH...

AH, THAT'S RIGHT.

ARE YOU INVOLVED IN THAT CASE?

I'M SAYING THAT WE SHOULD WORK TO-GETHER!

I'LL TALK TO YOUR SUBORDINATES BACK IN HAYAMA AND WHIP THEM INTO SHAPE.

HOW DOES THAT SOUND?

EH?

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

WE CAN'T JUST...

B-BUT WE'D NEED AN OFFICIAL REQUEST FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TOKYO AND KANAGAWA DEPARTMENTS...

WE BOTH WANT TO SEE THIS MYSTERY GET SOLVED, RIGHT?

SO COME ON, GIVE ME ALL THE DETAILS ON THE INVESTI-GATION!

AW, COME ON, THE TOP BRASS WILL JUST GET IN OUR WAY.

LET'S KEEP THIS BETWEEN US.

IF I FIND ANY NEW INFO, I'LL PER-SONALLY INFORM YOU.

...I STILL HAVE A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS.

I'LL LEAVE THINGS TO YOU.

WELL, KIBA-KUN...

YES, SIR! I'M ON THE CASE!

THUMP

I'LL SEE YOU LATER.

NOW I'LL BE IN THE RIGHT POSITION TO FIGURE OUT THE TRUTH BEHIND THE UDAGAWA CASE.

OH... OKAY.

I'D BETTER HEAD HOME.

3

WHEN MY WIFE IS FEELING BETTER, I HOPE YOU'LL COME VISIT.

What's actually true...

And what's a delusion?

.....

I...

I HAVE A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS.

...SO DO I...

WHY WAS UDAGAWA-SENSEI MURDERED?

I DON'T UNDER-STAND...

WHY ...